

# *Creative Harp*

## *Modes for Moods*

*and their use in beginning improvisation*

*The following pages accompany the Introduction  
CREATIVE HARPING - Modes for Moods - #1 Intro to the Modes*

*There are 9 additional lessons in this series.*

- #2 Dorian Mode*
- #3 Aeolian Mode*
- #4 Mixolydian Mode*
- #5 Locrian Mode*
- #6 Ionian Mode*
- #7 "Angel" Mode (pentatonic)*
- #8 Middle Eastern Mode*
- #9 The tunings and improvisations for the Chinese 5 Elements*
- #10 Celtic Circle of Music and Modulating from Mode to Mode*

*We suggest that you assemble this Book with dividers for the sequential lessons that are to follow. When you order videos/dvds in the future, you will be given a code to download them off the internet (or you may contact us if you are unable to do so. We aim to conserve on trees - paper and s/h costs to you.*

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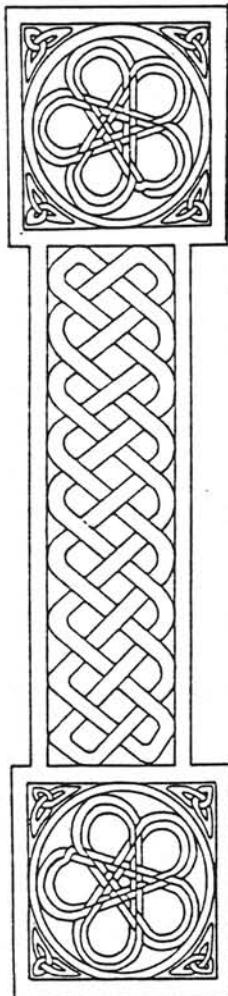
# MODES

## and Their Use in Improvisation for the Beginner

Harp or Piano

**WHY THIS BOOK?** This workbook is intended to introduce you to the modes and how to use them in a basic way. For further indepth study, any good music store should be able to provide you with Books on Modes. This book will give you suggested chords progressions for the key of C, meaning that if your harp is tuned in C, you can access the chord progressions for the 7 modes. There is also a transposition chart for each mode for the other keys. Examples of each mode are given.

**WHAT ARE MODES?** Modes are scales. (We refer to major mode, minor mode, pentatonic mode, whole tone mode, etc.) Modes refer to scales once used as the basis for medieval church music. It is these *diatonic church modes* that the contemporary musicians utilize. The principal diatonic modes employed are listed indicating the whole-step and half-step relationships between tones.



### C IONIAN MODE

Ionian Mode in the key of C Major (same as major scale)

Interval:      whole step   whole step   half step   whole step   whole step   whole step   half step

Mode (scale) degree: 1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8

### D DORIAN MODE

Dorian Mode in the key of C Major

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8

### E PHRYGIAN MODE

Phrygian Mode in the key of C Major

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8

### F LYDIAN MODE

Lydian Mode in the key of C Major

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8

### G MIXOLYDIAN MODE

Mixolydian Mode in the key of C Major

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8

### A AEOLIAN MODE

Aeolian Mode in the key of C Major (same as natural minor scale)

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8

### B LOCRIAN MODE

Locrian Mode in the key of C Major

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8

## IONIAN MODE

The Ionian Mode uses the same notes, and therefore the same key signature, as the major scale. The Ionian Mode in the key of C, begins on C and ends on C.

For improvisational purposes, the three chords C, F, and G are pretty basic. Here is a piece in the Ionian mode with an improvisational pattern following.

Two staves of music in the Ionian mode. The first staff contains four measures with chords C, F, C, and G. The second staff contains five measures with chords C, F, C, G, and C. The melody is improvisational, using the notes of the C major scale.

Here is an improvisation pattern based on the C, F, and G chord with the melody re-entering.

Four staves of music showing an improvisation pattern. The first staff has four measures with chords C, F, C, and G. The second staff has five measures with chords C, F, C, G, and C. The third staff has four measures with chords C, F, C, and G. The fourth staff has five measures with chords C, F, C, G, and C. The melody is improvisational, using the notes of the C major scale, and re-enters after the improvisation pattern.

## DORIAN MODE

Since we are dealing with the key of C tuning in this book, the Dorian Mode uses the same notes and key signature of the C Major scale from D to D.) The Dorian Mode may also be heard as a natural minor scale with the 6th degree raised one-half step.

For improvisational purposes, play back and forth between the Dm and C chords. You may wish to add F, G and Am chords as a variation. Here are some patterns and a selection in the Dorian mode. I have included the five steps of the STAR PROGRAM. They are Technique, Repertoire, Improvisation, Arranging and Composition. You can apply the same techniques to the remainder of the modes in this workbook.

### 1. TECHNIQUE/Exercises

For technique, start by practicing the scale in the Dorian mode. Be careful to effectively place the fingers, provide a good reach with the finger for the cross-over and cross-unders and follow through with a firm clean tone. Some tips I urge students to be aware of are:

- \* Keep the air flowing between the thumb and the pointer finger. It should almost resemble an L shape.
- \* Point the finger to the outer edge of the opposite side of the soundboard.
- \* Keep the shoulder and elbow relaxed, not too high.



### 2. IMPROVISATION

The reason that I stress improvisation is because this is a place where one can develop strong rhythm and train the brain to focus on one thing while there are other parts going on at the same time. To explain, play a D in the left hand with a 5th above, A. In this lesson we will count in 3/4 time. While playing this chord on the first beat, let the right hand begin a D just with the 2nd finger is fine and travel anywhere. The trick and secret is not to look at the right hand. Only focus your attention on the left hand chord and keep counting. Once you can improvise this, go on to breaking the chord so that you are playing a half note followed by a quarter. Begin your improvising again with your right hand on D. Try playing 2 or 3 notes together. Below, you will see some improve patterns in the Dorian mode. You may wish to shift down to the C with the G 5th on top for variation. Never look at the right hand though!

Improvisation patterns in the D Dorian Mode



### 3. NOTE-READING - Repertoire

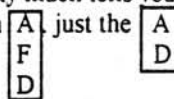
The selection that I have chosen for the Dorian mode is the beautiful tune **Scarborough Fair**. If you have never read notes before, I have added a chart for you to figure out the notes and for now you may write the letter names under the notes. It will be a good idea for you to get some flash cards from you local music store and drill yourself on these. It's the same process we went through learning multiplication tables in school.

Note-reading will help us build our repertoire so it is full of interesting and diversified melodies. Each player will undoubtedly add their own touch to the melodies through their own arrangements but familiar tunes interspersed with original compositions keeps the interest of an audience.



### 4. ARRANGING

Below you will find a blank bass clef for finding the sounds that harmonize with the Scarborough Fair melody. Use this as a worksheet. Make some copies and try not to go on to the next part until you have given yourself time to train your ear on finding complimentary notes to enhance the melody. Since it is in the Dorian mode, it pretty much tells you that your focus is going to be on the D chord. Keep the 3rd out it for now, (in other words, don't play a



#### Scarborough Fair



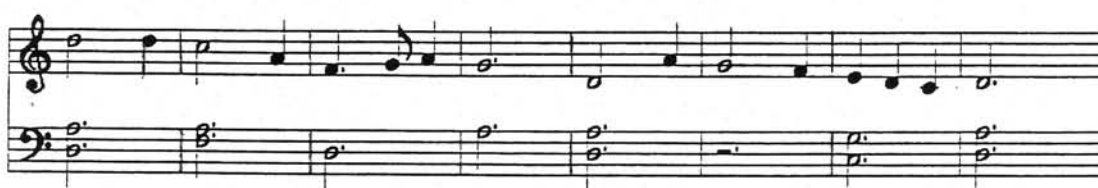
On the next couple of pages, you will see how we can take this melody and build it. Begin the piece first by playing it simply as a singular melody. Then just drone a D chord with the A 5th above to it.



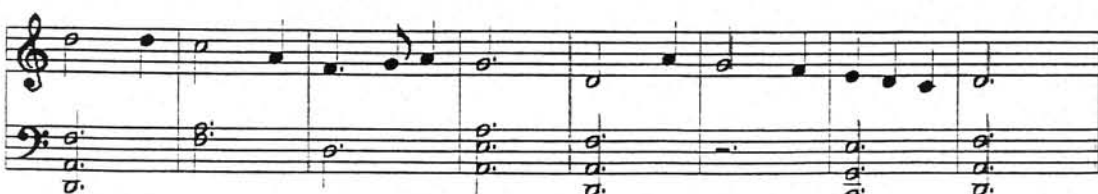
Now play it with the drone shifting down to the C with G 5th on top.



We can now play a very simple version with some alternate left hand chords.



This time, we can add some thirds but place them on top of the octave. Alternate between octaves and the octave plus the third.





Here is a big jump. By breaking up the chords and throwing in some rhythms, this piece can be extended into a jazzy sounding Scarborough Fair. Notice how the C# adds flavor. When coming to the end, continue to drone the D chord and improvise until you feel ready to come in with the melody again.

## Scarborough Fair

The musical score for "Scarborough Fair" is written in 3/4 time. It consists of four systems of staves, each with a treble and bass clef. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals. Handwritten annotations are present: "low C#" appears twice, once in the third system and once in the fourth system. In the fourth system, a handwritten note reads "Now slip into the Dorian improvisation".

## 5. COMPOSITION/ Originality

Now that you have stretched out this melody by playing it as a single line, with various drones, simple chords, extended chords, breaking the chords, then improvising - there is one more step. Using the 3/4 rhythm and the Dorian mode you can now compose your own new melody. It's as simple as working with telephone numbers, birthdates, anything that spurs you on to a melodic pattern. After you have worked your composition, it can be inserted with this piece. What may have been just a minute long piece has now turned into a good 8 - 10 minute masterpiece!



Here are a couple of tunes in the Dorian Mode.

## JOHN ANDERSON, MY JO

SCOTTISH

The musical score is written for piano in 4/4 time, featuring a Dorian mode (one flat). It consists of 17 numbered measures across five systems. The notation includes treble and bass staves with various musical symbols such as eighth notes, quarter notes, and chords. Measure 3 contains a whole note chord with a fermata. Measure 17 ends with a double bar line.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17

# ARRAN BOAT SONG

SCOTLAND

The musical score for "Arran Boat Song" is written for a single melodic line in treble clef, 6/8 time. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The score consists of seven staves, each containing a sequence of notes and rests, with chords indicated above the staff. The chords are: Dm, C, Dm, C, G (Staff 1); Dm, F, C, Dm, F, G (Staff 2); Dm, F, C, Dm, C, G (Staff 3); Dm, C, Dm, C, G (Staff 4); Dm, C, Dm, C, G (Staff 5); Dm, F, C, Dm, F, G (Staff 6); and Dm, F, C, Dm, C, G (Staff 7). The melody is characterized by a steady eighth-note rhythm, with some measures featuring beamed eighth notes and others featuring dotted eighth notes. The final measure of the seventh staff ends with a double bar line.

## PHRYGIAN MODE

In the key of C tuning, the Phrygian Mode uses the same notes and key signature of the C Major scale from E to E.) The Phrygian Mode may also be heard as a natural minor scale with the 2nd degree lowered one-half step. Although the triad built on the fundamental mode tone is minor EGB, a great deal of phrygian music (Spanish Flamenco and certain types of Jewish music) ends in major.

For improvisational purposes, play back and forth between the Em and F chords. You may wish to add Am and G chords for variation.

Here is a piece in the Phrygian mode. Try applying the 5 steps of the Dorian mode to this piece. A blank bass clef has been provided for you to work.

**The Mantle of Green**

The musical score for 'The Mantle of Green' is written in Phrygian mode (E D C B A G E). It consists of six systems of staves. Each system has a treble clef staff and a blank bass clef staff. The melody is written in the treble staff, and the bass staff is left blank for improvisation. The piece begins with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a common time signature (C). The melody is composed of eighth and quarter notes, with some rests. The piece ends with a double bar line.

## LYDIAN MODE

In the key of C tuning, the Lydian Mode uses the same notes and key signature of the C Major scale from F to F.) The Lydian Mode may also be heard as a major scale with the 4th degree raised one-half step (b $\flat$  in this key).

For improvisational purposes, play back and forth between the F and G chords. You may wish to change between Dm and Em for variation.

Here is a piece in the Lydian mode by Sylvia Woods. It actually appears in G Lydian in her book but for here I have put into C Lydian. You may order the full arrangement from her from her *Harp of Brandiswhere* book. After playing the basic melody, try the improvisation above, then go back into the melody again and elaborate.

### THE LEGEND

The musical score for "THE LEGEND" is written in C Lydian mode, 4/4 time. It consists of three systems of music. Each system contains a treble staff and a bass staff. The melody is primarily in the treble staff, featuring eighth and sixteenth notes, often with slurs and accents. The bass staff provides harmonic support with chords and single notes. The first system has five measures. The second system has five measures. The third system has five measures.

## MIXOLYDIAN MODE

In the key of C tuning, the Mixolydian Mode uses the same notes and key signature of the C Major scale from G to G.) The Mixolydian Mode may also be heard as a major scale with the 7th degree (leading tone) lowered one-half step (F $\flat$  in this key).

For improvisational purposes, play back and forth between the G and F chords adding an occasional C chord.

Here are some pieces in the Mixolydian mode.

### PEASE STRAY

### THE SILKIE

Here are some tunes in the Mixolydian Mode

## Mairi's Wedding

Musical score for "Mairi's Wedding" in 2/4 time, Mixolydian mode. The score consists of three staves of music. The first staff contains measures 1-5, the second staff contains measures 6-10, and the third staff contains measures 11-15. Chord symbols are placed above the notes: C, F, G, C, F, G, C, F, G. The melody features eighth and sixteenth notes, with a repeat sign at the end of the third staff.

## My lagan love

Irish

Musical score for "My lagan love" in 3/4 time, Mixolydian mode. The score consists of six staves of music. The first staff contains measures 1-4, the second staff contains measures 5-8, the third staff contains measures 9-12, the fourth staff contains measures 13-16, the fifth staff contains measures 17-20, and the sixth staff contains measures 21-24. Chord symbols are placed above the notes: G, C, G, F, G, C, G, C, G, Am, D#, G, C, Gm, G. The melody features eighth and sixteenth notes, with a repeat sign at the end of the sixth staff. The time signature changes from 3/4 to 4/4 in measure 13 and back to 3/4 in measure 17.

# Eleanor Plunkett

'Carolyn

The musical score is written for piano in 3/4 time. It consists of five systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff joined by a brace. The first system begins with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature of 3/4. The melody in the treble staff starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The bass staff provides a simple harmonic accompaniment. The second system includes first and second endings, marked '1.' and '2.' respectively. The third system also includes a first ending, marked '1.'. The fourth system includes a second ending, marked '2.'. The fifth system concludes the piece with a final cadence. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, bar lines, and repeat signs.



## AEOLIAN MODE

In the key of C tuning, the Aeolian Mode uses the same notes and key signature of the C Major scale from A to A.) The Aeolian Mode may also be viewed as a natural minor scale.

For improvisational purposes, Am and Dm chords work well for improvisation.

## Reflections

The musical score for "Reflections" is written in the Aeolian mode (natural minor) for the key of C. It consists of six systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef). The tempo/mood is marked "pensively" at the beginning. The score includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, quarter notes, and half notes, as well as rests. Dynamics include *pp* (pianissimo) and *rit.* (ritardando). The piece is marked with measure numbers 1, 5, 9, 13, 17, and 21. The final measure is marked with *pp* and *rit.*

# AEOLIAN MODE

## Seal Lullaby

1 Oh, hush thee my ba - by, the night is be - hind us, and

4 black are the wa - ters that spark - led so green, the moon o'er the com - bers, looks

7 down - ward to find us at rest in the hol - lows that rus - tle be - tween. Where

10 bil - low meets bil - low, there soft be thy pil - low; ah, wea - ry wee flip - per - ling

13 curl at thy ease! The storm shall not wake thee, nor shark o - ver take thee, a -

16 sleep in the arms of the slow swing - ing seas.

Chords: F, C, Am, C, F, C, G, F, F, C, Am, C, F, C, G, C, F, C, F, C, G, Em, Am

Aeolian Mode

## Childgrove

Traditional Celtic

Am Dm Em

Am Dm E<sup>7</sup> Am

C G Am E<sup>7</sup>

C Dm Am E<sup>7</sup> Am

## Farandole

Gerges Bizet

Am F Am C Dm F Em<sup>7</sup> Am

F Am C Dm F Em Am

## The Foggy Dew

Musical score for "The Foggy Dew" in 4/4 time. The melody is written on a single staff with a treble clef. The accompaniment is provided by chords written below the staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4.

Chords: Am, Gm, Em, Am, F, Am, Gm, Em, Am, F, Am, C, G, Em, Am, F, Am, Dm, Em, Am, F, Am.

## Hashivzinu

Musical score for "Hashivzinu" in 8/8 time. The melody is written on a single staff with a treble clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into three variations, numbered 1, 2, and 3.

1.   
 2.   
 3.

## LOCRIAN MODE

In the key of C tuning, the Locrian Mode uses the same notes and key signature of the C Major scale from B to B.) The fundamental tone of the Locrian mode is the leading tone (7th degree) of the major scale whose key signature is being used. (A in the key of C)

For improvisational purposes, I tend to focus on the fundamental tone (A) and create the tension with using the B in my right hand sometimes alternating to the D chord.

Here is a piece in the Locrian mode. After playing the basic melody, try the improvisation above, then go back into the melody again and elaborate.

### Exercise in Locrian Mode

Two staves of music. The first staff contains measures 1 through 5, and the second staff contains measures 6 through 10. The music is in C major key signature but uses the Locrian mode (starting on A). The right hand plays a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand plays a bass line with chords and single notes. Measure numbers 1, 5, and 9 are indicated at the start of their respective measures.

### Beginning of an improvisation passage

Three staves of music showing an improvisation passage. The first staff contains measures 11 through 14, and the second and third staves contain measures 15 through 18. The right hand features a wavy line indicating improvisation, with the handwritten text "Continue improvisation" above it. The left hand continues with a bass line. Measure numbers 11, 15, and 17 are indicated at the start of their respective measures.

LOCRIAN MODE

Various Arrangements - SAKURA

The musical score is written for piano in the Locrian mode, which is the seventh mode of the major scale. It consists of six systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff joined by a brace. The time signature is common time (C). The key signature has one flat (B-flat), which is characteristic of the Locrian mode on B. The score is divided into six systems, each starting with a measure number in the left margin: 1, 6, 11, 16, 21, and 26. The notation includes various note values (quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes), rests, and chords. The overall structure is a continuous piece of music.

**HOW TO DETERMINE THE MODE** Usually the final melody tone of the work (or passage) is the fundamental tone of the mode. Thus the mode (scale) should begin and end on the final melody tone of the work or passage. It is also important to look at the notes of the scale. By constructing an ascending scale of the melody notes, you will be able to see the pattern of whole steps and half steps. If there is continually an accidental on a given note, this will alter what the mode appears to be according to the ending tone, therefore just looking at the ending note will not be enough.

Take a look at the beginning and endings of the following excerpts and determine which mode the piece is in. Answers in the back of the book.

1. Beg. 

End. 

2. *Slowly*  
Beg. 

End. 

3. Beg. 

End. *Chorus* 

4. Beg. 

End. 

5. Beg. 

End. 

6. Beg. 

End. 

Answers: 1. Dorian 2. Aeolian 3. Mixolydian 4. Ionian 5. Phrygian 6. Mixolydian



**A CHART OF TRANSPOSED CHORDS  
TO USE FOR IMPROVISATIONS  
IN OTHER KEYS  
(the eight most common keys played on the harp)**

	<b>Key of C</b>
IONIAN	C, F, G
DORIAN	Dm, C, F, G, Am
PHRYGIAN	Em, F, Am, G
LYDIAN	F, G, Dm, Em
MIXOLYDIAN	G, F, Dm, G
AEOLIAN	Am, G, F, Em, Dm (for a variance sharp the G when playing the Em chord, thus E)
LOCRIAN	Am, Dm, Right hand focus on B

	<b>Key of G</b>
IONIAN	G, C, D
DORIAN	Am, G, C, D, Em
PHRYGIAN	Bm, C, Em, D
LYDIAN	C, D, Am, B
MIXOLYDIAN	D, C, Am, D
AEOLIAN	Em, D, C, Bm, Am (for a variance sharp the D in the Bm chord, thus a B chord)
LOCRIAN	Em, Am, Right hand focus on F#

	<b>Key of D</b>
IONIAN	D, G, A
DORIAN	Em, D, G, A, Bm
PHRYGIAN	F#m, G, Bm, A
LYDIAN	G, A, Em, F#m
MIXOLYDIAN	A, G, Em, A
AEOLIAN	Bm, A, G, F#m, Em (for a variance sharp the A(Bb on harps), when playing the F#m chord)
LOCRIAN	Bm, Em, Right hand focus on C#

	<b>Key of Ab</b>
IONIAN	Ab, Db, Eb
DORIAN	Bbm, Ab, Db, Eb, Fm
PHRYGIAN	Cm, Db, Fm, Eb
LYDIAN	Db, Eb, Bbm, Cm
MIXOLYDIAN	Eb, Db, Bbm, Eb
AEOLIAN	Fm, Eb, Db, Cm, Bbm (for a variance, play an E natural on the Cm chord)
LOCRIAN	Fm, Bbm, Right hand focus on G

	<b>Key of Eb</b>
IONIAN	Eb, Ab, Bb
DORIAN	Fm, Eb, Ab, Bb, Cm
PHRYGIAN	Gm, Ab, Cm, Bb
LYDIAN	Ab, B, Fm, Gm
MIXOLYDIAN	Bb, Ab, Fm, Bb
AEOLIAN	Cm, Bb, Abm, Gm, Fm (for a variance, play a B natural in the Gm chord, thus a G chord)
LOCRIAN	Cm, Fm, Right hand focus on D

	<b>Key of A</b>
IONIAN	A, D, E
DORIAN	Bm, A, D, E, F#m
PHRYGIAN	C#m, D, F#m, E
LYDIAN	D, E, Bm, C#m
MIXOLYDIAN	E, D, Bm, E
AEOLIAN	F#m, E, Dm, C#m, Bm for a variance sharp the E, F natural on the harp), during the C#m chord
LOCRIAN	F#m, Bm, Right hand focus on G#

	<b>Key of F</b>
IONIAN	F, Bb, C
DORIAN	Gm, F, Bb, C, Dm
PHRYGIAN	Am, Bb, Dm, C
LYDIAN	Bb, C, Gm, Am
MIXOLYDIAN	C, Bb, Gm, C
AEOLIAN	Dm, C, Bbm, Am, Gm (for a variance sharp the C in the Am Chord, thus an A chord)
LOCRIAN	Dm, Gm, Right hand focus on E

	<b>Key of Bb</b>
IONIAN	Bb, Eb, F
DORIAN	Cm, Bb, Eb, F, Gm
PHRYGIAN	Dm, Eb, Gm, F
LYDIAN	Eb, F, Cm, Dm
MIXOLYDIAN	F, Eb, Cm, F
AEOLIAN	Gm, F, Ebm, Dm, Cm (for a variance sharp the F during the Dm chord, thus D chord)
LOCRIAN	Gm, Cm, Right hand focus on A



